

REACHING HIGHER

Strategic Initiatives for Higher Education in Indiana

With increasing national and international competition, the economic well-being of Indiana's citizens and the quality of life of the state's communities are tied directly to the strength of public education. Ensuring that Indiana's citizens receive a high-quality education is an economic imperative and a moral obligation.

To thrive as a state and as individuals, all Hoosiers will need to achieve a depth and breadth of education never seen in the state's history.

To meet this objective, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education adopted *Reaching Higher: Strategic Initiatives for Higher Education in Indiana* with specific recommendations in six key focus areas. Some of the initiatives are summarized below.

Moving from access to success

- Clearly and consistently **establish completing college as the primary objective** for all Indiana's colleges and universities, with a focus on low-income students.
- **Restructure higher education state appropriations and financial incentives** to focus on degree and course completion rather than enrollment growth.
- Substantially **eliminate all remedial courses** at Indiana's public four-year colleges and universities.
- **Develop stronger relationships** between colleges and universities and high schools, including aligning instruction, providing high school feedback

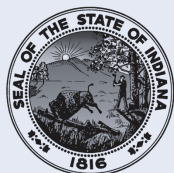
reports, and expanding high-quality dual-credit and Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities.

- As part of their strategic plans, **require colleges and universities to develop plans** for improving college completion and provide progress reports.

Making college affordable

- **Raise awareness** among students and parents of the value of early planning and the availability of student financial aid, including establishing a "College Day" to provide college and financial aid information for every student as well as hands-on assistance for seniors in completing financial aid forms and college applications.

- **Expand the Twenty-first Century Scholars enrollment program**, targeting students who currently qualify but are not participating and raising eligibility limits so middle-income students can apply.
- **Simplify Indiana's state financial aid program**, including ensuring that the March 10 deadline for financial aid is not a barrier.
- **Provide the first two years of college free** to middle- and low-income families.
- Encourage Indiana's colleges and universities to **design need-based financial aid programs** that "wrap around" and leverage the Twenty-first Century Scholars program.
- **Expand Indiana's Part-Time Grant Program** and focus eligibility on working adult students.



INDIANA COMMISSION
for
HIGHER EDUCATION

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Preparing K–12 teachers, school leaders and students for college success

- **Call for revised standards for new teachers** to provide clear and measurable expectations for entry-level teachers and ensure new teacher candidates have strong subject matter content knowledge and pass a test on reading instruction.
- **Transform education schools** into professional schools that focus on classroom practice. (Adopt medical school model.)
- **Collect and publicize data** on the quality and effectiveness of Indiana's teacher education programs.
- **Promote teaching as a valued profession** and accelerate recruitment into the fields of math, science, world languages and special education.
- **Ensure that high school students have the academic preparation they need** for college by encouraging them to work toward an advanced high school diploma, requiring them to take a rigorous math class their senior year and making world language a Core 40 diploma requirement.
- **Gradually raise the curriculum admission requirement** to Core 40 with Academic Honors at Ball State University, Indiana University Bloomington and Purdue University West Lafayette.

- **Define a common college readiness assessment** and a system of tools for K–12 students to help them know if they are on track for college.
- **Partner with K–12** on strategies such as bridge programs; academic support; acceleration opportunities for Twenty-first Century Scholars; and expanded pre-AP, AP and dual-credit opportunities to improve college readiness of low-income and minority students.

Focusing the role of community colleges

- **Continue to define, brand and publicize** what a comprehensive community college can provide to Indiana's citizens, communities and economy.
- **Establish a clearly defined floor for remedial instruction** offered at local community colleges and restructure remedial offerings to successfully address students' needs as quickly as possible.
- Develop, refine and bring to scale innovative instructional models designed to sharply **increase the number of recent high school graduates and working adults** who attend community college and earn an associate's degree.
- **Make transfer among colleges easier** by agreeing on a common, core associate's degree curriculum in specific fields.
- **Coordinate and provide financial incentives** for the expansion and delivery of workforce training to meet the needs of business and industry.

Strengthening Indiana's major research universities

- In the Indiana University and Purdue University strategic plans, **identify what it means to be among the best major research universities** in the country and the world, including identifying peer institutions and external rankings to assess progress.
- **Identify specific metrics**, including research activity and economic development, and monitor progress.
- **Develop strategies for improvement**, including creating an Innovation Agenda, identifying additional funding sources, improving the academic preparedness of students, and attracting and retaining top research faculty.

Embracing accountability

- **Report annually on a set of state-level dashboard indicators** that are aligned to the *Reaching Higher* goals; show trends; and allow for state, national and international comparisons.
- Support efforts by Indiana's colleges and universities to **participate in the national Voluntary System of Accountability**.
- **Develop biennial reports** from each college and university on progress toward institutional goals and efforts to increase institutional quality.
- **Continue the research support adjustment incentive and additional performance funding incentives** in the state higher education funding formula.



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